

PROUD OF WHO I AM

BY MICHELLE RUSHTON

As an 11-year-old, I prepared for my first real babysitting job, and I didn't quite know what to expect. As I entered the home I became a little nervous at the sight of cigarettes on the table and various containers of alcohol on the kitchen counter.

As the mom explained the basic babysitting procedures for her children, she also asked me where I went to school and what my favorite subjects were. Then she asked what church I went to. At that moment I froze.

I didn't know how to answer because I didn't know what kind of reaction I would get from someone who obviously didn't live by LDS standards. I tried to pretend I didn't hear her, and I continued to prepare the baby's crib for her nap. A little louder and more curious, she asked again, "Where do you go to church?"

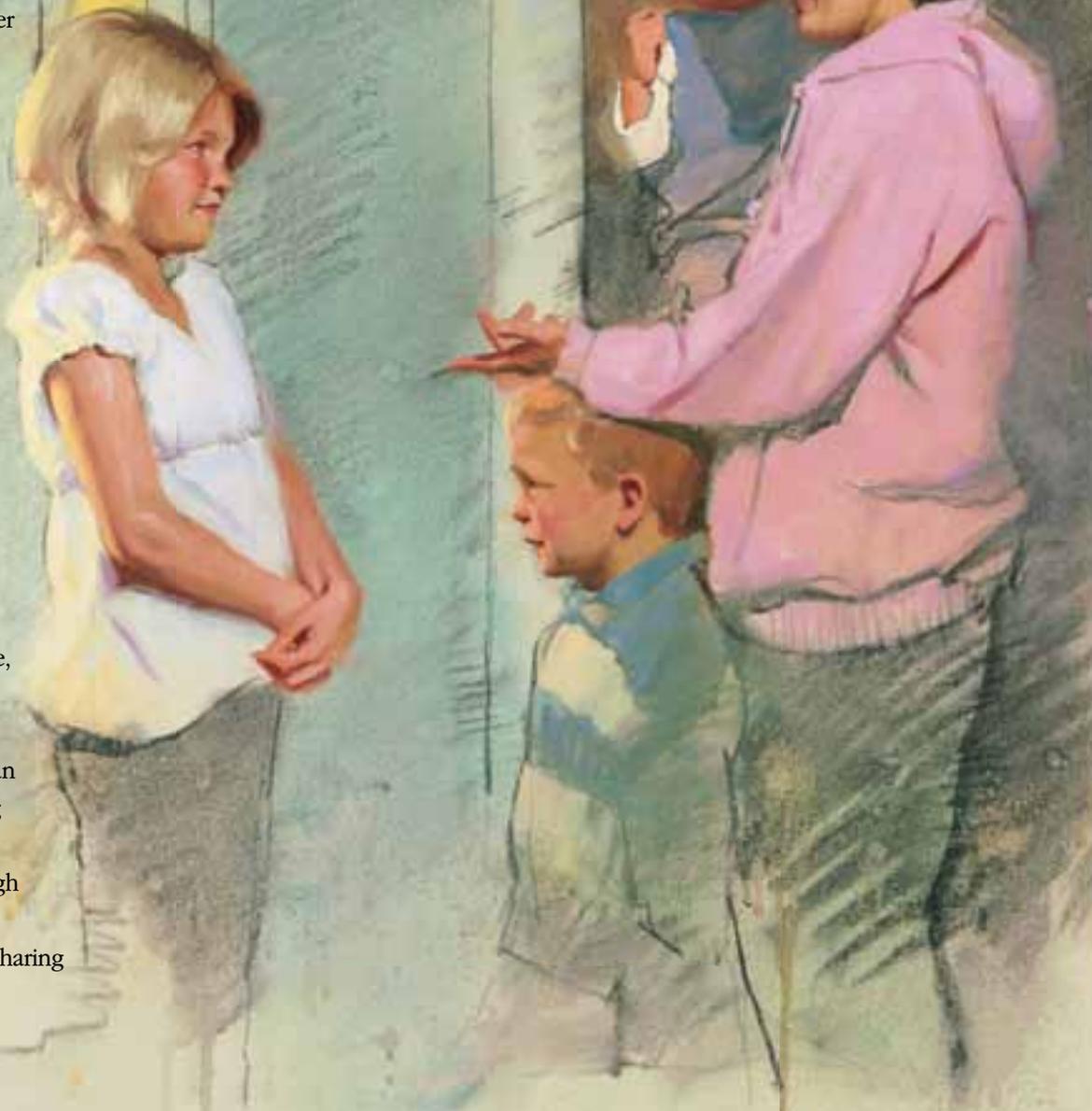
I turned around slowly and with my head slightly lowered whispered, "I'm Mormon." Although my response was barely audible, she knew exactly what I said. Contrary to what I was expecting, this woman began to reprimand me for lacking the confidence to be proud of being a Mormon. Although I don't remember her exact words, I do remember her sharing

stories about all the Mormons she had encountered in her life and how wonderful they were. She lectured me about standing up for what I believe in, holding my head up high, and being proud to be a Latter-day Saint.

The rest of the evening I babysat and pondered this woman's words. I knew that if I was going to be a good member of the Church, I had to give it my all. I don't remember how much money I made that evening or even how long I babysat, but I do know that once you discover you have a

testimony, you have to stand up for what you know is right.

Sometimes it takes someone else to remind us how important the gospel really is in our lives before we realize how strong our testimonies are. Hold your head up high and stand up for what you believe. **NE**



BEARING TESTIMONY TO THE BISHOP

BY ERICA LAYNE NIELSEN

I smoothed my skirt and took a deep breath. It sounded like the meeting on the other side of the door was coming to an end. The bishop stood in the doorway and shook hands as people filed out. He turned to me as I sat in a chair outside of his office, and he smiled broadly.

"Come on in, Erica," he said with his hand extended.

I stood and shook his hand, suddenly feeling older than 12 years old.

Bishop Morris was a kind man whose love you could always feel. I felt more at ease as soon as I saw him. I told myself to quit being nervous, to remember that interviews with the bishop are regular occurrences once you are in Young Women. Still, I just didn't know what to expect.

Soon the bishop had me talking about my family, school, and friends. He asked about my goals. And then we talked about testimony.

He asked me to share what I believed with him.

Suddenly my nervousness returned. I had only shared my testimony once before. So I gripped the chair handles and started with the first thing that came to mind—Joseph Smith. I told Bishop Morris that I believed Joseph Smith saw God the Father and Jesus Christ. I said I believed that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon.

THE COVER-UP

BY JOSEPH RAMIREZ

My first couple of months of months working at the grocery store were the toughest. As a courtesy clerk, I bagged and carried out groceries, cleaned toilets, swept the floors, emptied the garbage cans, and stocked the shelves. It wasn't

easy getting into the rhythm and learning where everything was, but I managed.

One day during those first two months, I was bagging groceries when I noticed a pornographic magazine cover in the magazine rack across from the checkout stand. At first I just tried to avoid it by working at other checkout stands. Eventually I realized that plan wouldn't work, because sooner or later I would have to work in that checkout stand. So when things slowed down a little, I got one of the store advertisements from the newspaper rack and stuffed it in front of the magazine.

I hoped that my trouble was over

I expressed my belief in this book, my gratitude for my family, and my admiration of our current prophet.

Before I knew it I had tears in my eyes. Goosebumps began to spread from my toes upward as I started talking about the Savior. I told the bishop that maybe I didn't know a lot

and that eventually they'd just throw out those magazines and put new ones in. But a week later I went in to work, and the advertisement I had placed in front of the magazine wasn't there. Someone must have taken it down.

The store was swamped with customers. I didn't

know what to do. The requirements of my job were such that I had to stay and work in that checkout stand. I was looking away as best I could, but that picture was right there, constantly tempting me. I was afraid that I would give in and look. So I said a silent prayer in my heart.

Five minutes after I prayed, the supervisor of the whole store came down from his office and placed a plastic shield in front of that magazine.

When we do our best to avoid temptation and ask Heavenly Father for help, He will hear us. Prayers are heard and answered. **NE**

yet but that I did know that Jesus Christ lived and died for me.

Until this moment, I hadn't recognized my own testimony. I read my scriptures and said my prayers, and I knew I had felt the Spirit, but I didn't know I had a testimony of my own. When I finally bore testimony, I knew. **NE**

